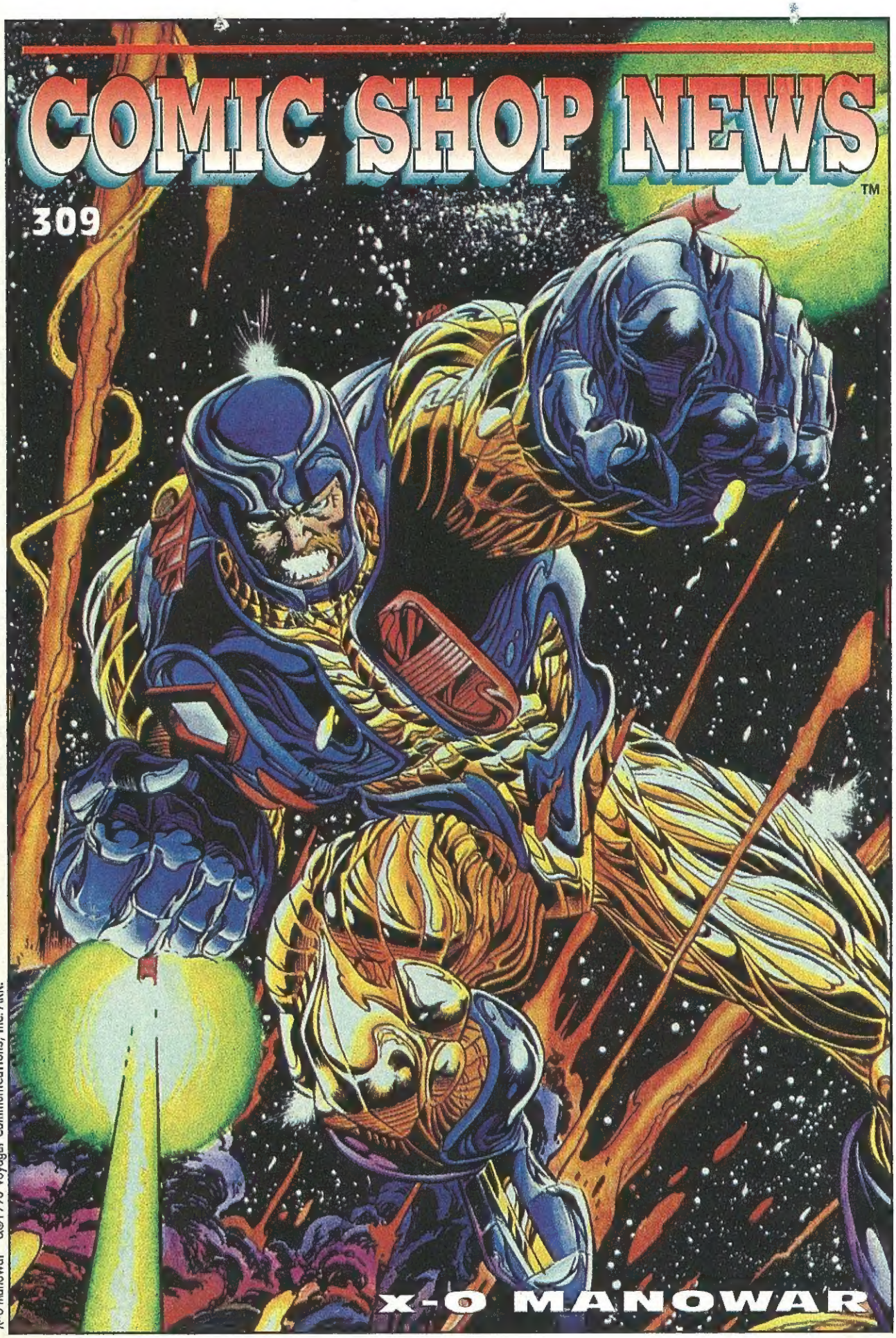
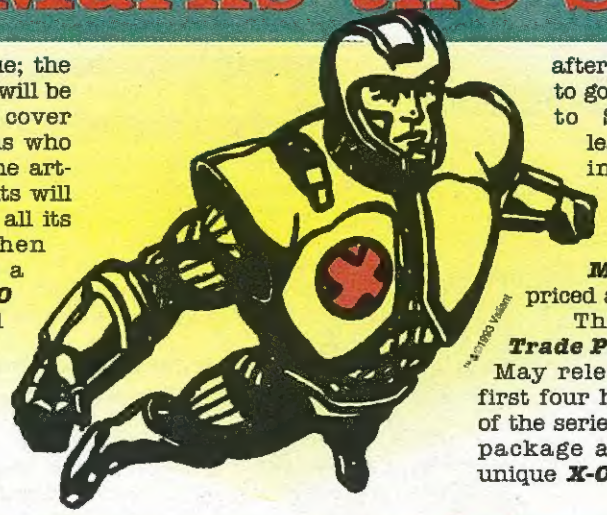


X-O Manowar ™&©1993 Voyager Communications, Inc. ARR.

X-O Marks the Spot



Fans who have been reading X-O Manowar know the origin of the X-O team of Aric and his armor... but what about the pre-X-O existence of both? Thus far, Valiant has told fans all too little about the true origins of the armor and about the early life of Aric; that's an omission that they'll remedy in May, though, with the release of ***X-O Manowar #0.***

X-O Manowar #0 is one of the highlights of Valiant's X-O Month; this special issue details the horrors Aric was forced to undergo in the almost sixteen hundred years he was a captive of the spider-aliens. Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti supply the art for this special issue; the Joe Quesada cover art will be highlighted by special cover enhancements (but fans who want a large copy of the artwork *sans* enhancements will be able to admire it in all its glory in June, when Valiant releases it as a $4.95 poster). ***X-O Manowar #0*** is priced at $3.50.

In ***X-O Manowar #19,*** also a May release, Randy helps X-O resolve his government problems. In the aftermath, Aric decides to go on a vacation trip to South America, leaving the X-O ring in Randy's care. The end result? X-O She-God of War! ***X-O Manowar #19*** is priced at $2.25.

The ***X-O Manowar Trade Paperback,*** also a May release, reprints the first four hard-to-find issues of the series. The polybagged package also includes the unique ***X-O Sourcebook,*** complete with transparent acetate overlays that detail the inner working of the X-O armor. This special sourcebook will be available nowhere else except in the $9.95 trade paperback.

Additionally, Planet Studios is producing a trio of X-O collectibles in May. Two pins will be available; one features a flying figure of X-O Manowar, while the other features the X-O symbol; each pin is priced at $6.95. Planet is also making available an X-O Manowar Ring that features the X-O emblem on a polished brass mens' size 9 1/2 ring priced at $29.95.

by WAYNE LEE

A Rose By Any Other Name Would Be As Deadly

It was almost four years ago that ***CSN*** first told you about the ***Batman/Grendel*** crossover project; alas, Batman and Grendel were stymied not by a powerful archvillain, but by much more mundane financial problems. The bankruptcy of Comico left the book in limbo for years; Comico was ultimately acquired by another owner, but in the interim Matt Wagner took his Grendel creation to another publisher, Dark Horse. Finally, though, the legal matters have been resolved and ***Batman/Grendel*** is at last cleared for a summer launch.

Batman/Grendel brings together the Dark Knight and the most popular of all the Grendel incarnations, the original Hunter Rose Grendel. Intrigued by the idea of challenging the Batman, Grendel moves from New York City to Gotham City, where he targets an archeological exhibit sponsored by Bruce Wayne as the object of his criminal intentions. Along the way, Grendel kidnaps a child and slaughters several innocent policemen, leading to an inevitable confrontation between this incarnation of evil and Gotham's Dark Knight...

Batman/Grendel is written and illustrated by Matt Wagner, who has written several other series for DC, including ***Sandman Mystery Theatre*** and the "Faces" arc in ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight***. The miniseries, co-produced by DC and Comico, is the latest in a series of DC collaborations that have included the DC/Fleetway ***Batman/Judge Dredd: Judgment On Gotham*** and the DC/Dark Horse ***Batman Vs. Predator.***

Batman/Grendel #1 is scheduled for June 24th release; the second issue follows two weeks later, on July 8th. Each 48-page prestige-format issue is priced at $4.95.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

COMIC SHOP NEWS™
309
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Men of Steel and Cotton

So which Superman is your favorite—the Cyborg, the Kid, the Kryptonian, or the Man of Steel? Graphitti Designs has made it easy for you to make your choices known to everyone, thanks to their four new ***Superman T-Shirts*** slated for Summer release. The shirts feature the four distinctive Superman logos on the front of navy blue, black, or purple shirts (the color is coordinated with the appropriate Superman). Each $16.95 shirt is screen printed on heavyweight 100% cotton; look for them in July.

Viz Is Planning a Pixy Junket

There's a legend that kissing a pixy queen leads to great fortune and power—but no one ever really expected to see a pixy queen, since everyone assumed they were simply the creatures of legend. In ***Pixy Junket,*** not only does the world see a pixy, but she becomes the object of an intense search as everyone hopes to capture her and discover just who—or what—she is. The government, secret agents, even the royal family want to find her—as do the two young men who initially discovered her descending from a UFO as they traveled through the mountains.

Pixy Junket is a fantasy adventure created by a newcomer who works under the pen name *Pure*. The story (initially entitled ***Junket)*** was originally published in Japan by Seishinsha, the publishers who introduced the world to *Masamune Shirow*. According to Viz editor *Satoru Fujii*, "Pure is a very exciting new artist who is clearly a disciple of the Masamune Shirow school of creative sci-fi. ***Pixy Junket*** has a distinctly novel storyline and original artwork which is sure to appeal to fans of Shirow's ***Appleseed*** and to newcomers alike."

Pixy Junket #1, a $2.75 comic that kicks off the six-issue limited series, is scheduled for mid-July release.

A Dark Future For the Titans

"The Darkening," the storyline that has been building in recent issues of ***New Titans***, reaches its zenith in ***New Titans #100***—and it's a shocker that'll shake up the Titans for years to come. "***New Titans #100*** is the start of a new era for the series," editor *Rob Simpson* said. "We have lots in store for the future, and this epic chapter in their exploits is only the beginning of the next great phase in Titans history."

Fans will find good news and bad news in this 48-page special issue: on the good side, there's the long-awaited wedding of Nightwing and Starfire. On the bad side, Raven is confirmed to be the villain behind the Titans' recent problems—and she comes out of hiding to launch an attack against Starfire. Nightwing can't do much to help, because he's too busy holding his own against Deathwing, the future-Nightwing from 2001 who's been featured in recent issues of ***Team Titans.*** As if all this isn't enough, this issue also introduces the team's "new" member, Arsenal, and guest-stars Robin, Flash, and Aqualad. This landmark book is written by *Marv Wolfman* and illustrated by *Tom Grummett* and *Al Vey;* a variety of guest-artists supply celebratory pin-ups. ***New Titans #100***, a $3.50 comic highlighted with a holografx foil-enhanced cover, is scheduled for June 24th release.

Before You Take That Mansion Tour...

You may be able to get by in your own home pretty well without a guidebook—but if your home were the X-Men's Mansion, you'd have a lot more to deal with. After all, how many other homes have a Danger Room, a mutant-detecting computer system, and so on?...

In June, Marvel offers fans a chance to peruse the same guidebook that is issued to every X-Man: ***The X-Men Survival Guide to the Mansion.*** This isn't just another comic book or magazine; it's a 48-page book with a six-page interior gatefold, all contained in a spiral binding far quick reference when you're trying to figure out just how to turn off the Danger Room equipment. The survival Guide contains blueprints, instructions, house rules, and more; the design of the package was overseen by editor *Suzanne Gaffney*, who has assembled an X-pert creative team that includes *Andy Kubert, Richard Bennett, Eliot Brown, Henry Flint,* and *Scott Lobdell.* The ***X-Men Survival Guide to the Mansion***, a $6.95 spiral-bound guide, is scheduled for June 24th release.

Into the Ozone Twice

Ozone Productions, the company responsible for many of the stunning *Olivia De Berardinis* publications that remain so popular with art fans and collectors, has two new Olivia items coming out this summer that every fan will want. First is the ***Olivia 1994 Calendar,*** featuring twelve paintings in a 12" x 12" square format that opens to 12" x 24". Ozone Productions warns that "due to the timely nature of this product, ***Olivia 1994*** will only be offered once," so don't miss out! The $10.99 calendar is scheduled for early July release.

The Olivia item for which fans have been clamoring for years become a reality in July with the release of ***Let Them Eat Cheesecake: The Art of Olivia.*** This $29.95 9" x 12" hardcover features over one hundred high-quality Olivia paintings in quality reproduction; for those of you who are looking for something to read as well as something attractive to look at, there's an introduction by *Hugh Hefner*, a letter from famed illustrator *Alberto Vargas*, and numerous comments by Olivia concerning her techniques, her models, and her approach to art. As with almost all Olivia items, both the calendar and the hardcover book feature tasteful female nudity, so they are intended for a mature audience.

If I Had a Hammer...

Have we got Norse for you! Horizon Hobbies & Toys continues to add to its line of Marvel Super-Heroes model kits this summer with the release of ***The Mighty Thor,*** a 15" tall 1/6 scale model kit depicting the God of Thunder, hammer raised to strike. The incredibly detailed kit captures the fine points of the hero's costume in a much more realistic style than you've ever seen in the pages of his comic book adventures. The $45 vinyl kit is scheduled for June release.

Protector's Street Fighter Appears in Street Fighter #3

If there's any member of The Protectors who has the right attitude to be a street fighter, it's Ferret. It's only appropriate, then, that Ferret will make a unique guest appearance in ***Street Fighter #3.*** "When Ferret hears the news of the passing of one of the Street Fighters, he realizes there may be an opening for a new American Street Fighter. He gives consideration to trying to join the competition," writer *Len Strazewski* said. Soon, Ferret is face-to-face with E. Honda, the sumo master. "This may be one of the most violent and yet strangest battles that Ferret has ever had!" Strazewski added.

Street Fighter #3 will tie in with the upcoming ***Ferret*** series (and the astute among you notice we said *series*, not miniseries, because Malibu has announced that they've upgraded ***Ferret*** to an ongoing series). This issue, illustrated by *Don Hillsman* and *Jeff Whiting*, will also introduce a new female Street Fighter, Nidi. "Nida is the first Filipino Street Fighter," Strazewski said. "She is currently tending to Sheng Long in Okinawa. ***Street Fighter #3***, a $2.25 comic, is scheduled for July release.

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We Created the Universe...Now YOU Can Own It

Imagine...owning a copy of every product ever made for the VALIANT Action Adventure comic book line. Not just a copy of every regular issue, but every gold logo, every premium book, every poster and promotional item produced by VALIANT between March, 1991 and June, 1993. That's the Grand Prize in the VALIANT SERIAL NUMBER CONTEST...

All regular VALIANT titles shipping in May and June will carry an individual serial number as part of the VALIANT SERIAL NUMBER CONTEST. Bound into each book will be an insert with that copy's alpha-numeric serial number. In August, VALIANT will draw lucky-number winners, for prizes as follows:

- **GRAND PRIZE (1 awarded)** - A complete collection of all the VALIANT Action Adventure books published from March 1991 to June 1993, including all #1's, #0's, all golds, variations, etc., an uncut sheet of Magnus cards, various promotional materials, etc.
- **2nd Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER***™ with any related promotional items.
- **3th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM***™ with any related promotional items.
- **4th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***HARBINGER***™ with any related promotional items.
- **5th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***X-O MANOWAR***™ with any related promotional items.
- **6th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***SHADOWMAN***™ with any related promotional items.
- **7th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***ARCHER & ARMSTRONG***™ with any related promotional items.
- **8th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***ETERNAL WARRIOR***™ with any related promotional items.
- **9th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***RAI***™ with any related promotional items.
- **10th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***H.A.R.D. CORPS***™ with any related promotional items.
- **11th Prize (1 awarded)** - a complete run of ***BLOODSHOT***™ with any related promtional items.
- **12th Prize (100 awarded)** - a complete run of ***TUROK, DINOSAUR HUNTER***™ with any related promotional items.
- **13th Prize (100 awarded)** - a copy of ***DEATHMATE***™ Prologue with any related promotional items.
- **14th Prize (100 awarded)** - a copy of ***SECRET WEAPONS***™ with any related promotional items.

Here is a complete listing of all books that will be a part of the VALIANT SERIAL NUMBER CONTEST:

ARCHER & ARMSTRONG™
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#7 & #8
ETERNAL WARRIOR™
#13 & #14
HARBINGER™
#20 & #21
H.A.R.D. CORPS™
#9 & #10
MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER™
#27 & #28
RAI AND THE FUTURE FORCE™
#12 & #13
SECRET WEAPONS™
#1
SHADOWMAN™
#16 & #17
SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM™
#24 & #25
TUROK, DINOSAUR HUNTER™
#3 & #4
X-O MANOWAR™
#19 & #20

And now for the mandatory boring legal stuff (but read it anyway - it tells you where to send your winning entry):

VALIANT SERIAL NUMBER CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY: Individual sweepstakes lucky numbers are printed in the "WIN A VALIANT COLLECTION" advertisement found in specially marked Voyager Comic Books on sale May-June 1993. You may obtain a free "Lucky Number" (while supplies last) by mailing a self-addressed stamped envelope to: VALIANT LUCKY NUMBER REQUEST, P.O. BOX 679, SAYREVILLE, NJ 08871-0679. Residents of WA and VT need not affix return postage. Limit one request per individual, address, or household. All requests must be received by June 30th, 1993.

2. Compare your lucky number to the list of winning numbers, generated at random by computer under the supervision of Marden-Kane, Inc., and printed in the August, 1993 issues of specially marked Voyager Comic Books or on display at participating retail outlets. You may also obtain a listing of the winning numbers by mailing a self-addressed stamped envelope after August 15th, 1993 to: VALIANT COLLECTION WINNING NUMBERS, P.O. Box 1239, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011. Residents of WA and VT need not affix return postage.

3. PRIZES: (1) Grand First Prize, set of all comic books in 1st prize through 14th prize, cover retail value $527.65, (1) 2nd prize, ***MAGNUS***, CRV: $101.55, (1) 3rd, ***SOLAR***, CRV: $59.00, (1) 4th, ***HARBINGER***, CRV: $72.70, (1) 5th, ***X-O***, CRV: $60.15, (1) 6th, Shadowman, CRV: $42.50, (1) 7th, A & A, CRV: $42.00, (1) 8th ***ETERNAL WARRIOR***, CRV: $34.25, (1) 9th, ***RAI***, CRV: $33.55, (1) 10th, ***H.A.R.D.CORPS***, CRV: $25.75, (1) 11th, ***BLOODSHOT***, CRV: $19.50, (100) 12th, ***TUROK***, CRV: $12.00 each, (100) 13th, ***DEATHMATE***, CRV: $6.40 each, (100) 14th, ***SECRET WEAPONS***, CRV: $4.50 each. Odds of winning are: Grand through 11th prize 1:8,000,000, 12th prize 1:80,000, 13th prize 1:80,000, 14th prize 1:80,000

4. HOW TO CLAIM A PRIZE: If your "lucky number" matches one of the winning numbers generated by computer, you are a winner. To claim your prize, make a copy of the page with your winning number for your records. Then mail the entire comic book via certified mail, return receipt requested to: VALIANT COLLECTION WINNERS, P.O. BOX 1239 OLD CHELSEA STATION, NEW YORK, NY 10011. Once your claim has been verified as a winner, your comic book will be returned to you and your prize will be processed. All claims must be received no later than September 7th, 1993.

5. If you are not a Lucky Number winner you are still eligible for any unclaimed prizes and special prizes in a Second Chance Sweepstakes. To enter, mail your name and address clearly hand-printed on a 3" x 5" piece of paper to: VOYAGER SECOND CHANCE SWEEPSTAKES, P.O. BOX 505, SAYREVILLE, NJ 08871-0505. One entry per envelope, mechanically reproduced entries not eligible. Not responsible for late, lost, or misdirected mail. All entries must be received by September 15th, 1993. Winners will be selected in a random drawing conducted by Marden-Kane, Inc., on or about September 20th, 1993 from all eligible entries received. Decision of the judges is final on all matters relating to this sweepstakes. Odds of winning the unclaimed prizes are dependent upon the number of entries received and the number of prizes available. SPECIAL SECOND CHANCE PRIZES: 10 prizes, set of all gold books published, cover retail value $25.00 per set. Odds of winning dependent of the number of entries received. Total value of prizes: $3,558.60.

6. Sweepstakes open to residents of the U.S. except Voyager Advertisers and employees, immediate families of Voyager Communications, its affiliates, subsidiaries, distributors and retailers of VALIANT Comic Books and Marden-Kane, Inc. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All Federal, State and local laws apply. Winners may be required to execute an Affidavit of Eligibility and Release which must be returned within 14 days of notification or an alternate winner will be selected. Winners consent to the use of their name, photograph and/or likeness for advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation. Taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of the prize winners.

7. To receive a list of major prize winners (Grand through 11th) available after September 20th, 1993, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: VOYAGER WINNERS, P.O. BOX 1239, OLD CHELSEA STATION, NEW YORK, NY 10011.

Remember: Every newly released regular VALIANT comic purchased during the months of May and June increases the chances of winning. This may be your only opportunity to receive the entire VALIANT history...all in one shot...FOR FREE.

THE VALIANT® SERIAL NUMBER CONTEST

One Number Wins It All

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Of Paramount Importance

Roy and Dann Thomas' ***Captain Thunder and Blue Bolt,*** the superhero series published by Heroic Publishing a few years ago and recently brought back to the comic shop racks, has been optioned for film treatment. ***Daily Variety*** reports that Paramount Pictures has bought the rights to ***Captain Thunder and Blue Bolt*** on behalf of movie producer *Joe Wizan*. This is, of course, an option—that doesn't mean that a film is definitely in the works, although it is the first step towards the silver screen. ***Captain Thunder and Blue Bolt*** fans will also be happy to hear that Heroic will finally publish the last installment of the storyline later this year.

New Plot Threads For Ragman

Ragman's last miniseries attracted a great deal of attention as it redefined the hero and tied him in more closely with his Gotham City milieu. This summer's miniseries, ***Ragman: Cry of the Dead***, takes a different approach: it takes Ragman to New Orleans, where he investigates a series of grisly murders that seem to have demonic overtones; his investigation leads him into a battle with a spirit called marinette, a voodoo god of vengeance spurred by the restless souls of murdered children.

Ragman: Cry of the Dead is written by *Elaine Lee*, known to many for her work on ***Starstruck.*** The series is illustrated by *Gabriel Morissette*, while ***Ragman*** co-creator *Joe Kubert* supplies the covers. ***Ragman: Cry of the Dead #1***, the $1.75 debut issue of a six-issue miniseries, is scheduled for June 24th release.

An Artist's Artis

Tom Artis, the popular artist whose work has appeared in ***She-Hulk*** and various Impact/DC titles, has signed on to illustrate (along with *Aubrey Bradford*) the lead story in ***U.N. Force Files #2.*** This story, entitled "Yeh-Shen," features Wall, one of the UN Force's Chinese operatives. This superhero tale, written by *Lester Swint*, includes an adaptation of the classic Chinese fairy tale "Yeh-Shen" upon which Cinderella is based. The second story, starring Australian UN Force member Outrider, is written by *Robert McTyre* and illustrated by ***Tales From the Heart***'s *Seitu Hayden*. ***U.N. Force Files #2,*** a June release, is priced at $2.95.

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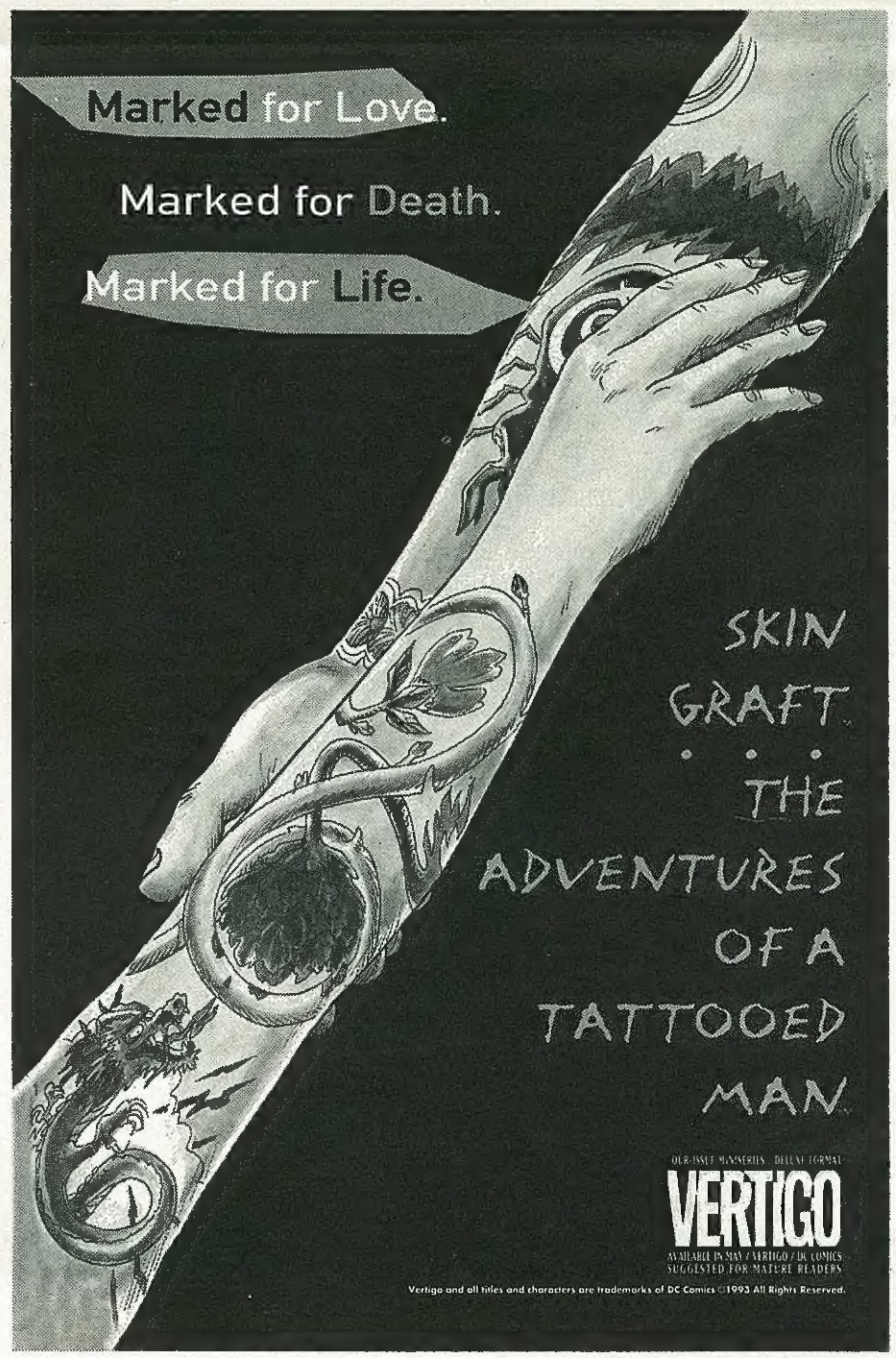
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DAVE JOHNSON

BY CLIFF BIGGERS

Dave Johnson, the artist of DC's Chain Gang War and the upcoming Super Patriot miniseries from Image, isn't a newcomer to the field—but as he's quick to point out, he hasn't exactly been slaving away in comics for years, either. Dave's artistic career began with After Apocalypse #1, where he inked Amazing Spider-Man artist Mark Bagley's pencils in the mid-1980's; a few years later, Dave began working with Dark Horse Comics, doing a special Terminator short story, some Earth Boys features for Dark Horse Presents, among other things. Soon after, he was doing some work for both Marvel and DC; one thing led to another, and Dave found himself tapped to handle the art honors for a new comic, Chain Gang War, that takes the entire Punisher urban-vigilante theme in a new direction. Recently, Dave took a few minutes away from his two hot projects to talk to CSN—but don't tell his editors that, because they think he's slaving over the drawing board!...

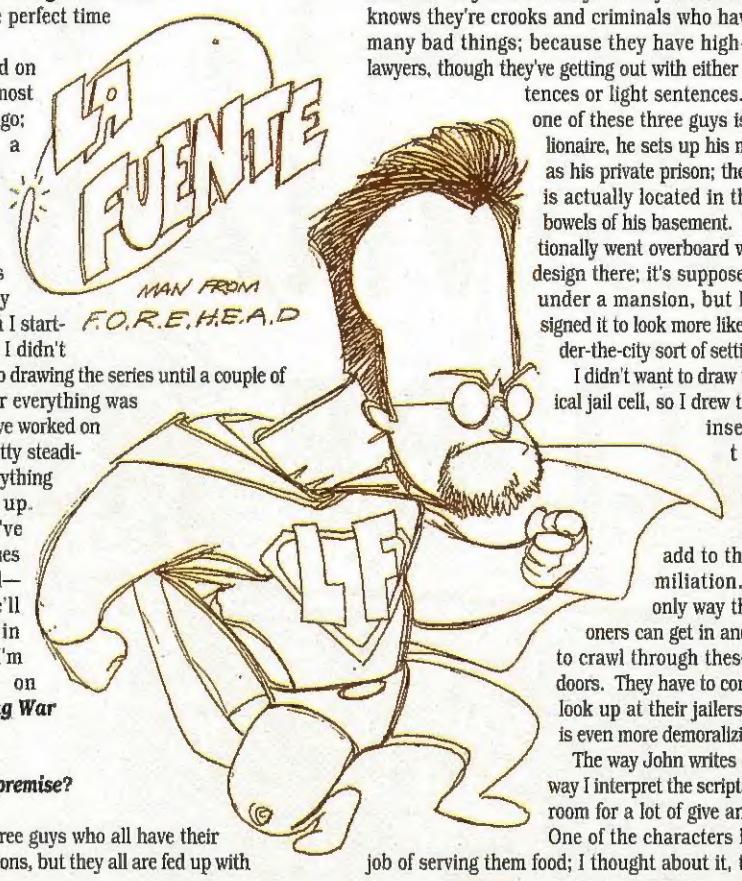
How did you become involved with John Wagner on Chain Gang War?

I started doing the ***Demon Annual*** for Dan Raspler; Joe Phillips was doing it, and it was getting down to deadline crunch and he wasn't going to be able to finish on time. They gave me a chapter, and Dan really liked my work, so he started looking for things for me to do.

John Wagner had proposed a series to DC with the intention of getting the artist who did ***Chopper*** to draw it; Dan was thinking that the book really needed an American style artist to do the book, though, so he talked him out of that and then got me to do some samples.

I sent in the samples, thinking I'd get paid for doing them, at least; things changed, though, and the book became a creator-owned book, so I ended up getting ultimately paid for the samples because they were part of the stories.

I liked the script a lot—but at that time, I would have taken almost *anything*. Even if was ***Bambi Goes to Iraq***, I would have taken it, because I *really* wanted the work, and I had to pay rent here at the studio. I got tired of working for a living, so I really needed an art job. ***Chain Gang War*** came along at the perfect time for me.



We started on the book almost a full year ago; it's been a while since the project was first approved, really. It's hard to say exactly when I started, because I didn't really get into drawing the series until a couple of months after everything was approved. I've worked on the book pretty steadily since everything got set up. though; I've done six issues so far and—since there'll be a fill-in in issue #7—I'm working on ***Chain Gang War #8*** now.

What's the premise?

It's about three guys who all have their own motivations, but they all are fed up with the criminal courts letting guys with money go simply because they have money. Pretty much everyone knows they're crooks and criminals who have done many bad things; because they have high-priced lawyers, though they've getting out with either no sentences or light sentences. Since one of these three guys is a millionaire, he sets up his mansion as his private prison; the prison is actually located in the deep bowels of his basement. I intentionally went overboard with the design there; it's supposed to be under a mansion, but I've designed it to look more like an under-the-city sort of setting.

I didn't want to draw the typical jail cell, so I drew the cells inset into the ground to even further add to their humiliation. The only way the prisoners can get in and out is to crawl through these small doors. They have to constantly look up at their jailers, which is even more demoralizing.

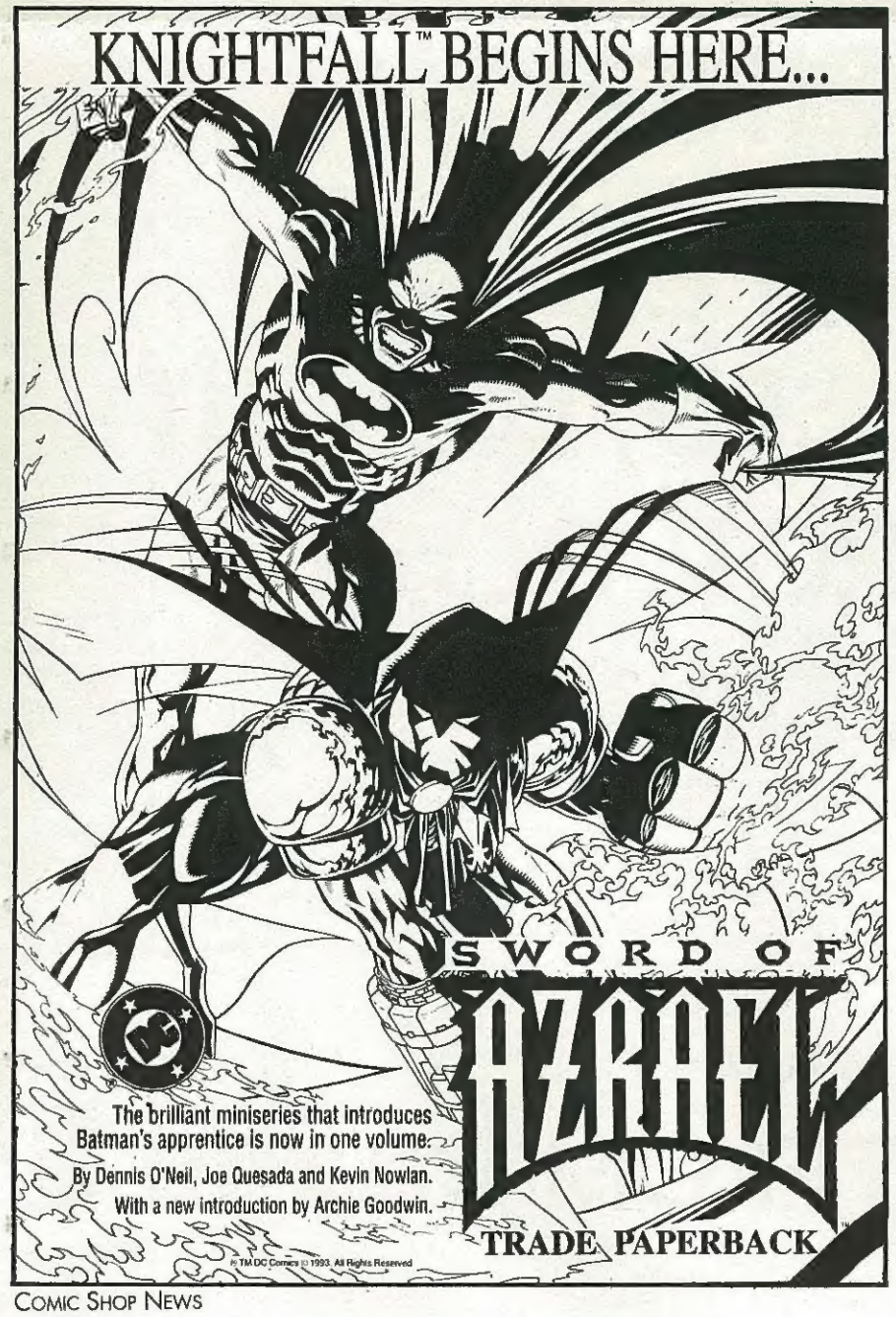
The way John writes and the way I interpret the scripts leaves room for a lot of give and take. One of the characters has the job of serving them food; I thought about it, though, and said, "They don't have time to make food all the time." From there, we came up with the running joke of having them always serving the prisoners pizza.

Each of the three has his own motivation. Two of them are motivated by revenge, but one of them—well, he lives in a bad section of time, and he's tired of seeing his street go downhill and he wants to do something about it. They want to make the world better, but they're just average guys. They aren't killers, so they can't just execute them; that's why they imprison them. One of the characters was in Vietnam—the one who comes from the poor side of town—and this will tie in later with ***Deathstroke, the Terminator,*** because he was in Deathstroke's squad, so he was involved in the massacre that made Deathstroke wig out. He accidentally shot a Viet Cong woman who got in the line of fire of a VC regular, and he's never forgotten it. So he's not really a killer, but he has killed.

One of the other characters, Curtis, is the crazy one, as you'll see later. He and his brother owned a garbage collection company; one of the mob bosses decided to force them out of business by killing his brother and framing Curtis, sending him to prison.

Yale, the rich one, had a girlfriend who was killed by her employer, who owned this club and was a comedian. He pretty much got off scot free because of his mob connections. This gives him a motivation to want to put these people in jail.

They also have another reason for not killing their prisoners: if you kill somebody, that's the end of their torment. Actually, this is a much crueler way to torment somebody, locking them away in this deep, dark, dank prison and make them suffer for eighty or ninety years. There is no parole board, there are no reviews—you're in jail, you're found guilty, you're going to stay there for your crimes against humanity. That's the ba-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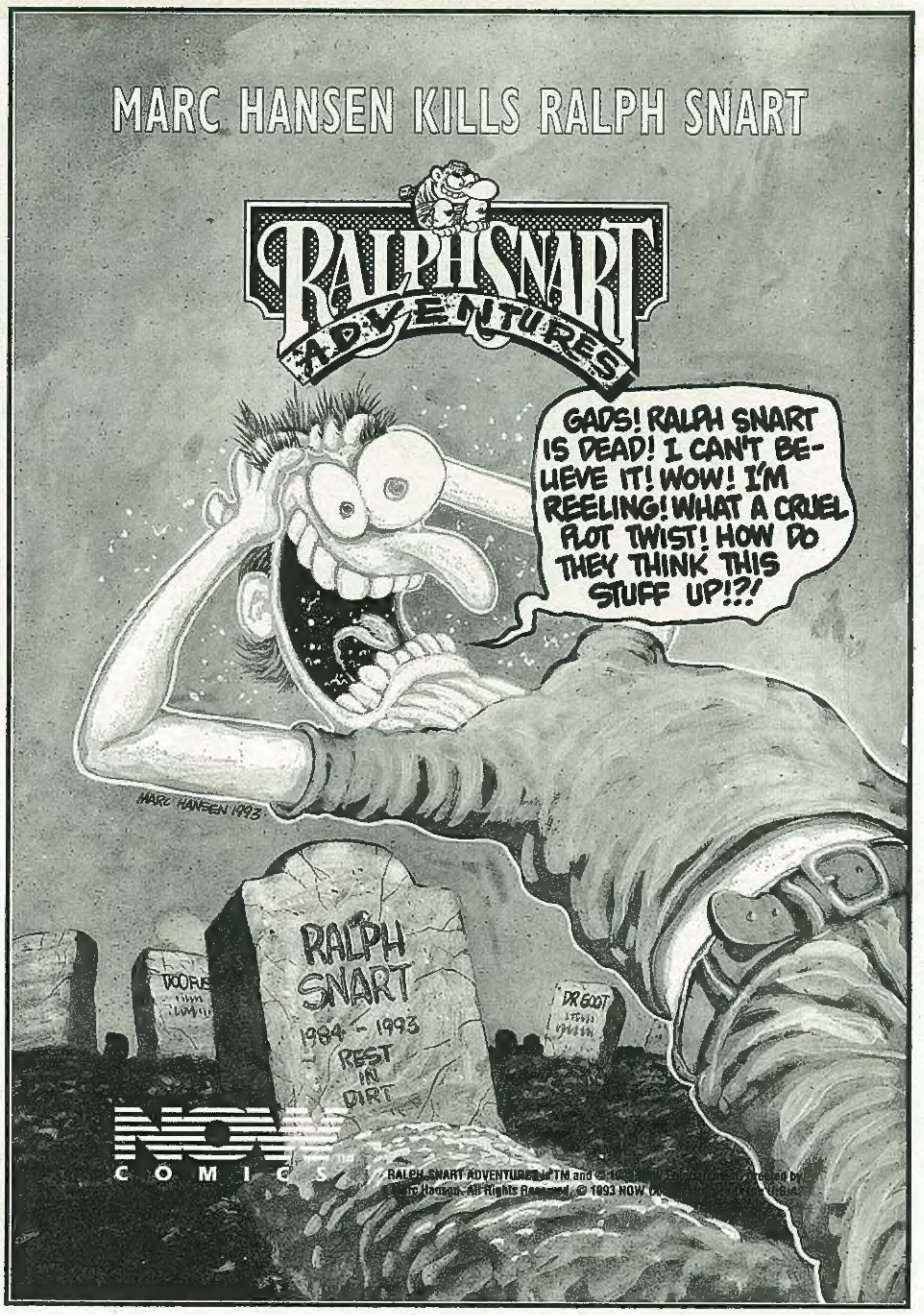
MARC HANSEN KILLS RALPH SNART
RALPH SNART ADVENTURES!
GADS! RALPH SNART IS DEAD! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WOW! I'M REELING! WHAT A CRUEL PLOT TWIST! HOW DO THEY THINK THIS STUFF UP!?!
MARC HANSEN 1993
RALPH SNART
1984 - 1993
REST IN DIRT
DR GLOT
NOW COMICS
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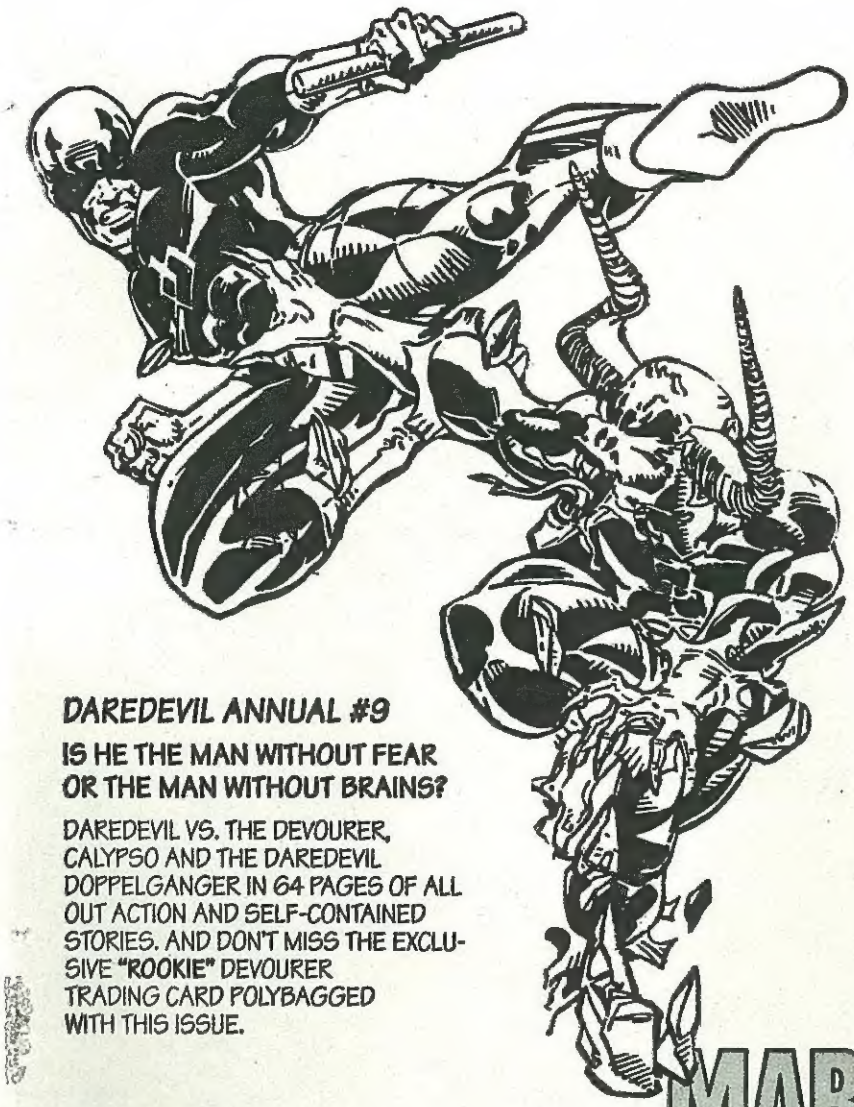
MAXIMUM™ SOUND...

image™

IS ON ITS WAY!!



DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #9

IS HE THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR OR THE MAN WITHOUT BRAINS?

DAREDEVIL VS. THE DEVOURER, CALYPSO AND THE DAREDEVIL DOPPELGANGER IN 64 PAGES OF ALL OUT ACTION AND SELF-CONTAINED STORIES. AND DON'T MISS THE EXCLUSIVE **"ROOKIE"** DEVOURER TRADING CARD POLYBAGGED WITH THIS ISSUE.

HELLSTORM #4

FIRE FIGHT!

DON'T MISS THE SCORCHING TEAM-UP OF GHOST RIDER AND HELLSTORM. BY RAFAEL NIEVES AND MICHAEL BAIR, THIS IS THE TRAIL-BLAZING LEAD-IN TO NEXT MONTH'S "MIDNIGHT MASSACRE" CROSSOVER.

MARVEL® COMICS

MOON KNIGHT #52

WHEN GAMBIT SHOWS UP, MOON KNIGHT GETS DECKED.

IT'S GAMBIT VS. MOON KNIGHT VS. THE WEREWOLF BY NIGHT WHEN THE HELLBENT ATTACK AGAIN. BY TERRY KAVANAGH, JAMES FRY & CHRIS IVY.

FEUD™

FEUD #1 OF 4

IT'S FEUD FOR THOUGHT!

WRITTEN BY THE PUNISHER'S OWN MIKE BARON; AND DRAWN BY ALIENS' MARK NELSON, FEUD TELLS THE STORY OF FOUR FEUDING ALIEN NATIONS ALL DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER FOR SURVIVAL. THIS HEAVY HITTER PREMIERE FEATURES AN EMBOSSED COVER WITH METALLIC INK.

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SILVER SURFER #82

THERE'S NO SOLITUDE IN THIS FORTRESS!

THE GLADIATOR, BETA RAY BILL, JACK OF HEARTS, AND GANYMEDE JOIN THE SURFER IN A 48 PAGE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL ON TYRANT'S FORTRESS PLANET. RON MARZ, RON LIM AND TOM CHRISTOPHER.

DEATHLOK #25

DEATHLOK VS. MOSES!!!

IT'S MOSES MAGNUM'S FORCES AGAINST DEATHLOK AND BLACK PANTHER IN WAKANDA. 48 PAGES OF UNBELIEVABLE ACTION FEATURE THE BEGINNING OF THE RETURN OF THE MOST REQUESTED CHARACTER TO EVER BE HOPED FOR IN THIS BOOK! ALL THIS AND AN AWESOME HOLO-GRAFX FOIL COVER.

GHOST RIDER & BLAZE: SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #12

STARTING YEAR TWO WITH A VENGEANCE!

GLOW-IN-THE-DARK COVER! NEW LOGO! GHOST RIDER AND BLAZE MATCH OFF AGAINST VENGEANCE! BY HOWARD MACKIE, ADAM KUBERT AND BILL REINHOLD.

MARVEL® COMICS

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #202

WAR CRIES!

THINGS GET WORSE FOR SPIDER-MAN IN PART NINE OF THE FOURTEEN PART "MAXIMUM CARNAGE" CROSSOVER AS HIS ALLIANCE WITH VENOM BEGINS TO UNRAVEL. THIS CHAPTER IS WRITTEN BY J.M. DEMATTEIS AND SAL BUSCEMA.

sis of the story; it's about human nature and real people.

One of the characters becomes more extreme as the series goes along; after a while, he starts talking to his gun. He's not totally stable...

Since these guys are obviously in a high-risk line of work, will the Chain Gang gain or lose any members in the near future?

There was talk earlier about killing one of them off, but it's been put on hiatus right now. There's always a chance, though, that there may be another Chain Gang member in the future, or that one of the current members may die; we're not ruling it out.

The characters do go through some major changes in the first few issues, though.Curtis wanted revenge on the henchmen who framed him; when he got out of jail, he started talking about getting them back. They heard about it, so the mob sent a hit man to take Curtis out; he did this by wrapping him up in a chain and throwing him in the river. He escapes, but the experience freaks him out so much that his hair turned white. In the fourth issue, he finally gets even with the henchmen, but it takes a large toll on him.

Are there any other crossovers in the works?

Deathstroke is the only DC hero who's showing up in the first few issues, but there's been talk about eventually having Batman show up, since this does take place in his city... sort of. I didn't want to be tied down to having to draw the gothic Gotham City that they did in the film. I was an art deco fan instead, so the city has a real art deco feel to it. ***Chain Gang War*** is set in modern times, but there's a lot of art deco influence. For instance, there's a new "in" thing within the city to drive classic 1920's and 1930's automobiles; that's my explanation for it, but the real explanation is that I hate drawing boxy cars. I'd much rather draw smooth, curving cars. Cars are usually the bane of comic book artists' lives, so I'm trying to have some fun drawing them. I'm even warping them just a tiny bit when they're turning, adding a bit of an animation touch to it to make the page more active. It's not cartoony, but it's certainly influenced by animation.

Who's inking Chain Gang War?

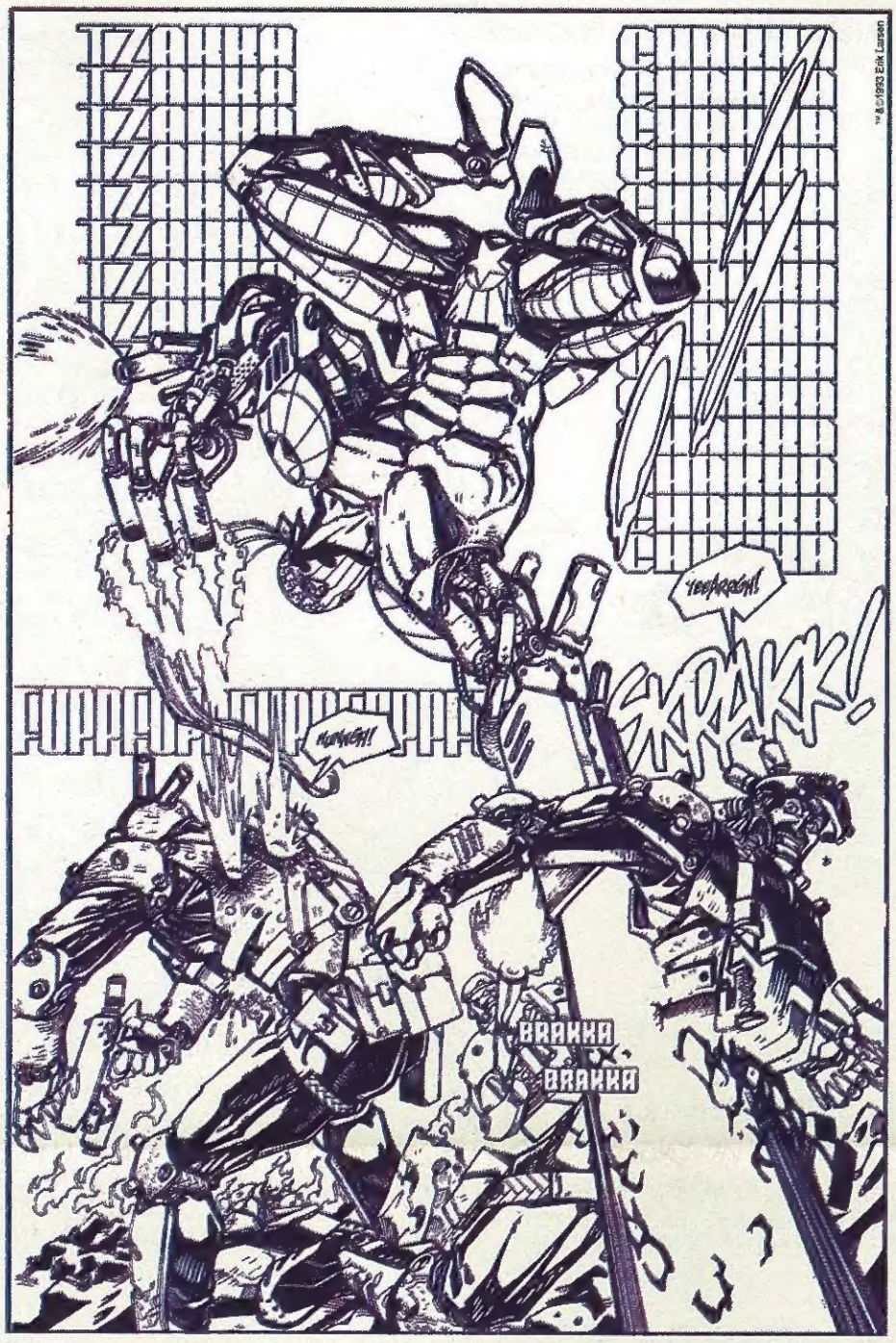
John Dell III, inker master, is inking the book. This is his first full series for DC; he inked Joe and I on the ***Demon Annual,*** and he used to ink Joe on ***Speed Racer.*** That's where Joe knew him, so Joe asked for him; I saw what he was doing on Joe's work, and I thought that'd be pretty cool on my pencils, so he inked my stuff, too. I liked what he did; he was really clean, really true to the pencils. I'm one of those tight pencillers, so what I put down is what I want; he doesn't try to reinterpret what I've drawn. I asked for him on this, and Dan liked what he did on the ***Demon Annual,*** so it all worked out.

Dan Raspler has been a prince about putting up with my petty demands; he's let me have input in picking my inker, picking the colorist—even down to selecting the letterer. I've been in situations when the editor didn't care so long as the book was on time; Dan has remained involved, and he's been behind the project 100%. I couldn't ask for more.

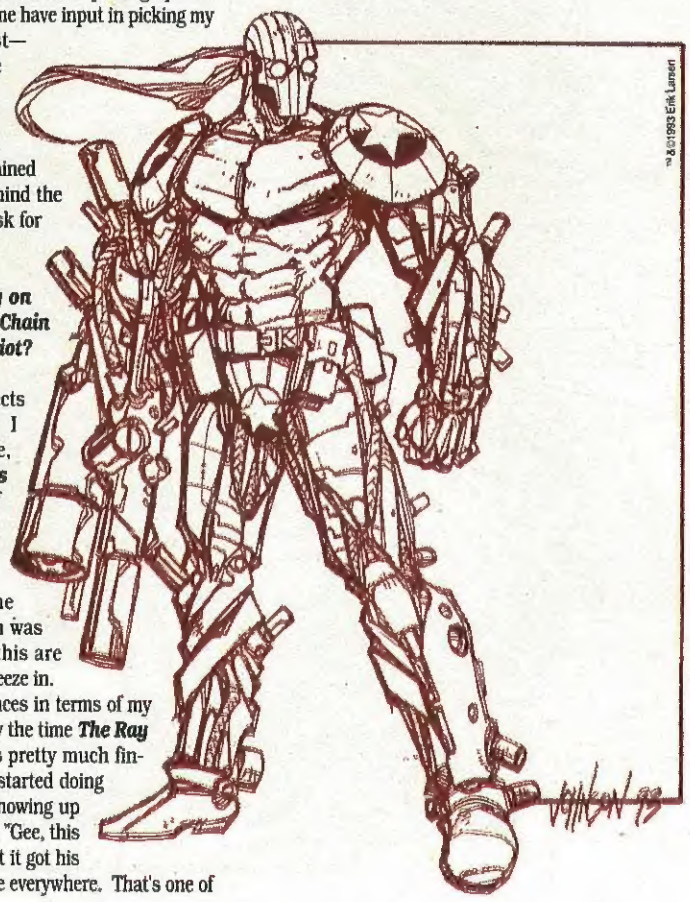
Have you been working on anything else other than Chain Gang War and Super Patriot?

I've done a few other projects while I was working on this. I did a cover here and there, including some ***Venus Wars*** covers and a cover for one of Dark Horse's ***Comics Greatest World*** books. I also did the comic book that was included with the Ripley action figure, which was fun. Small projects like this are fun, and they're easy to squeeze in.

One of my biggest influences in terms of my career was Joe Quesada. By the time ***The Ray*** started coming out, he was pretty much finished with the book, so he started doing all these covers that were showing up at the same time. I thought, "Gee, this guy must be the Flash!" But it got his name and his work out there everywhere. That's one of the reasons it was hard for me to turn down little projects that got my name out there; it's getting to be a bigger and bigger pond, and I don't want to be a small fish who gets lost in it.



How did the Super Patriot miniseries come your way?



Super Patriot only appeared in one issue of ***Savage Dragon,*** but he's been getting more fan letters than Savage Dragon. The natural conclusion, based on that, is that there should be a Super Patriot miniseries.

He was one of the Image characters I saw that I could see myself doing. Everyone here at the studio had an opportunity to do a Spawn pin-up, for instance, but I couldn't see myself doing Spawn because I couldn't bring anything to it other than what I'd already see everyone else do. I'd rather do something I can really get behind, and Super Patriot was perfect for that.

I ran into Erik at San Diego; I was sitting at the table, minding my own business, when Erik Larsen walked up and started looking at my stuff. It was very unexpected; I didn't think the Image guys would be just walking around the con. He said he liked my stuff, and I was really flattered.

Later on, we'll be gearing up to do a studio project called ***Ground Zero.*** We originally proposed it to Image, but it was an eleven issue project, so that was a lot of commitment. Ultimately, they turned it down, but Erik saw my proposal artwork for a storyline involving an android, and he thought that I would be good on Super Patriot, who is a cyborg. I'm very manga influenced when I'm doing that style of artwork, and I guess he thought my style would put a unique stamp on the character.

A month or two went by, and every time I'd talk to Erik, I'd tell him, "Whatever you do, don't kill off Super-Patriot." I guess that stuck with him, because once the miniseries was on the schedule, he asked me to draw it.

The thing that finally sold it for me was that Keith Giffen was plotting it. I knew that it would be an intricate story, since I'd read Keith's ***Legion*** stuff. That's one of the aspects of his work that impressed me—the many layers of subtlety and complexity behind the story. I knew it wouldn't just be fistfights, but that there'd but an intriguing story behind it.

We're creating a HYDRA like organization for this series; the rest of the Image Universe can use them if they so deem. We're trying to do it right, because we both like this sort of story. One of the books that I've always wanted to do since I was a kid was—well, like Mark Bagley always wanted to do Spider-Man, I always wanted to do SHIELD. I don't think I'll get the chance to do that since SHIELD has been cancelled, so I wanted to create an organization that would allow me to do my SHIELD-like stuff. Keith came up with this new organization called Sword of the Covenant, and they'll play a major role in the story.

The Sword of the Covenant is very extensive; they have operators all over the world in powerful positions, and they're just now getting to the point that they want to be known. They've been covert for God knows how many years, and they're finally ready to start exerting their influence over the world. Super Patriot is their first target; they figure if they can get him and turn him against their creators, that would be a big blow. That's what the story hinges on—that and the fact that the Super Patriot has a mental block against fighting super powered characters after his experiences with the Savage Dragon. Whenever he fights a superhero or supervillain, he sees the Dragon standing there instead, and he refuses to fight. That's how the Covenant gets hold of him. It's a very action-oriented series.

There are all these guys on both sides with shaved heads and lab coats with megabyte drives plugged into the back of their heads. I'm a big fan of many, many tubes in my technology drawings; these tube-like memory drives are sticking out of the back of their heads. The bigger the tubes, the more brain power they have. The bad guys have bigger tubes that they carry in packs on their backs, giving them incredible brain power.

Are you able to borrow from any of your favorite art influences for this series?

I'm very manga influenced, which doesn't show up as much in ***Chain Gang War.*** The stuff I'm doing for ***Super Patriot,*** though, is much more manga influenced in both linear style and fluid motion.

Their whole look and their architecture is cathedral influenced, mixed with modern Dave Johnson technology—"kudzu technology" is the name they use for it around here, because it seems to grow everywhere. The costumes are sort of Crusades influenced—tunics and skullcaps and all that.

How tight are Keith Giffen's layouts for the book? He's become famous for his tight layouts on Legion, among other books.

Keith got a bad rap on ***Legion*** for that nine-panel layout. He was doing that for ***Legion,*** but he is a very versatile writer and artist. Some people have the misconception that Keith lays out the book in such detail that all you have to do is finish the drawings and you're done. What Keith is really doing is putting in all the information necessary to make it possible for an artist to draw his story. His layouts aren't something that an artist has to follow; they're there to make sure that everything that has to be on the page is there. You have to think about it; I have to come up with all the architecture, the perspective, and all that. He gives me layouts that are, at times, just glorified stick figures, and it's up to me to modify it in my style. It's a guideline, and I can break from it if I want to in order to suit my own needs. Keith is easy to work with that way. No artist can see he can't fit in what Keith wants in a panel, because Keith has already proven that it can be done in his layouts.

Who's inking Super Patriot?

I'll be inking ***Super Patriot*** myself; I have an assistant who's filling in blacks and inking some of the background, but about 95% of what you see will be my inks. I've tried to get Karl Story to help some; he's on a totally different wavelength than I am in terms of inking. Karl is one of the best inkers in the industry with brush and crowquill; the way I ink is more like European style meets Japanese style. It's really free and detailed, especially with technology.

Karl and I inked the first cover to ***Chain Gang War;*** it wasn't that John couldn't do it, but they needed it right away, and it wasn't easy to just do it there. I wanted to do it, in a way, because I knew it was going to be blown up into poster size, so I knew that every line need to be so clean and perfect... Karl and I worked on it, and it looked great. That's one of the benefits of being in the studio; you never know when you're going to need a little help from someone else who's particularly good at something. That's the way the studio should work...

Is it difficult doing two such distinctively different books?

I spend a lot of time adjusting from one style to the other, since I'm working on ***Chain Gang War*** and ***Super***

Patriot at the same time. I almost feel schizophrenic sometimes, having to switch modes from one book to another. It's helping balance my yin and yang, though; before I started ***Super Patriot***, I found myself trying to fit in my high-tech stylings into Super Patriot. The script would call for someone to look at a television monitor in a room, and before I knew it, I had drawn this high-tech device that didn't fit in. I grew up on robots and space ships and things like that, and that's why I like to draw detailed technology.

Everyone in the studio shows up in the book at one time or another. I have a running gag: almost any time there's a medical technician scene, I'm in there, although my facial hair varies from appearance to appearance. Brian Stelfreeze is even the model for one of the characters in ***Chain Gang War;*** it's based on Brian like he might look twenty-five or thirty years from now, after he's gained a lot of weight, put on a lot more muscle, and lost his hair. He has signed a model release form and he's totally comfortable with this character, just in case anyone in DC legal is having a heart attack right now...

Do you have time to work on anything else?

The studio (Gaijin Studio) is doing the ***Namor Annual*** this year. It may be a little bit late, but we're going to do it, and that'll be fun. It will eventually come out, though.

The studio is the best thing that's happened to me in terms of my career; I've been able to make a lot of contacts because I was in the studio, and I've learned a lot about comic art from the other people here. It's also great on a personal level; I'll be working here and we'll get a phone call from Frank Miller or someone, and that's really exciting. You're no longer on the other side of the table; you're talking to them as an artist, and they're willing to sit down and shoot the breeze with you.

The studio is also good in terms of projects; if one person is offered a project that he isn't up to doing, he'll turn to someone else and ask them what they think about it. Suddenly, you have work that you weren't originally in line for. It's great for advancing my career, I've tried to repay the favor; I've been involved in getting two local guys some work, one with Personality and one with Marvel.

Sometimes I feel like I've been so lucky that sooner or later I'm going to have to "pay my dues." I look at other guys' careers, working away for a couple of years at small companies and maybe not getting paid for their work, and I feel very lucky. I went from working for Dark Horse, doing the Earth Boys with you guys, to the studio; within six months, I was getting work with DC. It's been great ever since. I've been waiting for it to come down and crash on me, but I'll be happy if it never does.

I hope I never become a hot flash-in-the-pan artist, though, because I don't want to be locked in to one style forever. With two different books like ***Chain Gang War*** and ***Super Patriot*** out there, it'll prove that I can do different things. I wouldn't mind being like a Bill Sienkiewicz, developing one new style after another year after year. I think drawing in one style year after year would be stagnant. I don't think I'll ever really be a trend-setter, but as long as I can have a long career with new challenges that don't tie me down to doing the same thing over and over for twenty-five years, I'll be a happy guy.

Last Week *CSN* was another 16-pager featuring reviews of *Gregory III, Spyke, Chain Gang War, Lobo Annual 1, Understanding Comics, The Warlock Chronicles* and *Aliens: Sacrifice.*

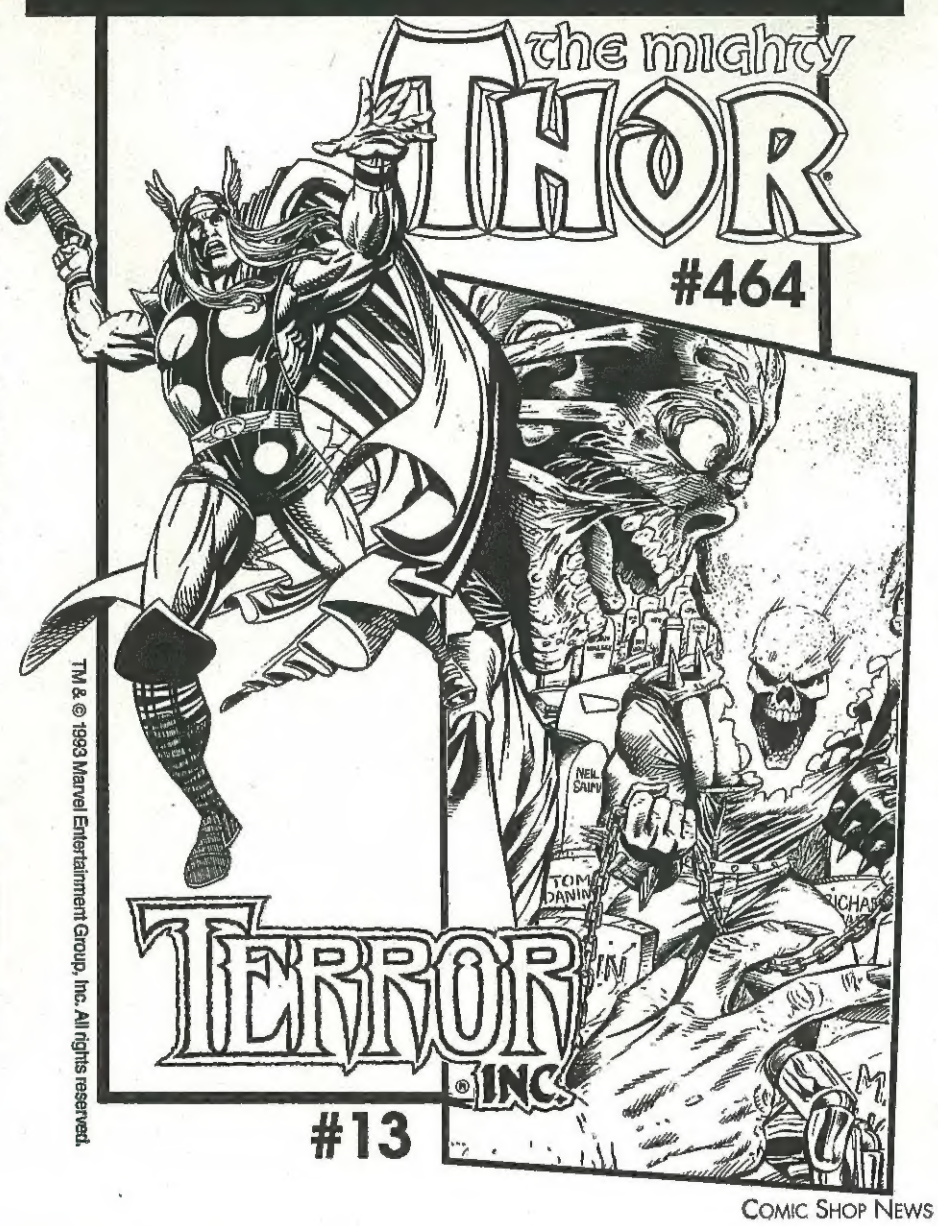
Next Week *CSN* will feature the complete June Checklist.

COMIC SHOP NEWS

Miss a Week and You Miss a Lot!

CRUSADE CROSSOVERS

The never-ending battle continues in this week's crossover titles



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MARVEL HOT PICKS

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED #2!
The cataclysmic conclusion to "Maximum Carnage!"

SPIDER-MAN: CARNAGE!
This mega hot 80-page bookshelf comic reprints Carnage's debut! Miss it not!

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ANNUAL #3!
We're introducing the Cuchulain with an exclusive trading card in a 64-page polybagged extravaganza!

DR. STRANGE #56!
It's a feeding frenzy in this INFINITY CRUSADE crossover!

GR/BLAZE: SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #13!
A gold ink, black parchment cover reveals all in the conclusion to "Midnight Massacre!"

MOON KNIGHT #53!
Gambit might not playing with a full deck, but he's your ace in the hole!

MARVEL COMICS

MARVEL COMICS SHIPPING THE WEEK OF JUNE 29TH

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